

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 AID-05 COME-00

EB-08 FRB-03 XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01 AF-10

EA-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 HUD-01 AGRE-00 CU-04 DIWY-01

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R 182010Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6836

INFO AMEHASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY NASSAU

AMEMBASSY PORT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KINGSTON 4818

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PDEV, PGOV, JM

SUBJECT: PNP APPROACHES ANNUAL CONFERENCE

1. THE RULING PEOPLE'S NATIONAL PARTY (PNP) IS PRESENTLY SCHEDULED TO BEGIN ITS ANNUAL PARTY CONFERENCE ON SEPTEMBER 8, THE ANNUAL MEETING WILL CONCLUDE ON SEPTEMBER 11 WITH A PUBLIC SESSION IN THE NATIONAL STADIUM.

2. THE MEETING THIS YEAR IS EXPECTED TO BE IN SHARP CONTRAST TO THAT OF LAST YEAR. THEN THE PNP USED THE OCCASION TO OPEN ITS CAMPAIGN FOR THE DECEMBER, 1976 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. THE SPEAKERS MADE MUCH OF THE PARTY'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE TAKING POWER IN FEBRUARY, 1972 AND PROMISED FURTHER ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BOONS TO JAMAICANS IF RETURNED TO POWER. THIS YEAR THE PARTY MEETS IN THE SHADOW OF THE COUNTRY'S INTENSE ECONOMIC CRISIS. UNEMPLOYMENT IS MOUNTING, AND THE INCREASINGLY FRE-
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QUENT SHORTAGES OF CONSUMER GOODS, ACCOMPANIED BY PRICE HIKES FOR NECESSITIES, TOUCH ALL JAMAICANS. IN SEEKING ASSISTANCE, THE PNP HAS FOUND IT DISCREET TO MUTE ITS CRITICISM OF THE UNITED STATES AND OTHER WESTERN NATIONS AND TO ABANDON ITS ATTACKS ON THE IMF. IT HAS ALSO HAD TO TEMPER ITS ASSERTIONS OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY

SINCE THEY HAVE OFFERED NO NOTEWORTHY ASSISTANCE. SOME RESPONSIBLE LOCAL POLITICAL ANALYSTS FEEL THAT THE RULING PARTY'S SELF-CONFIDENCE MAY BE REDUCED.

3. ALTHOUGH THE ANNUAL MEETING IS ONLY THREE WEEKS AWAY, IT HAS RECEIVED SURPRISINGLY LITTLE ADVANCE PUBLICITY, AND THIS MAY REFLECT THE UNCERTAINTIES WHICH CONFRONT PARTY LEADERS. IT MAY ALSO REFLECT TENSIONS WITHIN THE PNP. WE ARE TOLD RELIABLY THAT THE PARTY IS IN CONSIDERABLE FERMENT AS THE "MODERATE" AND "RADICAL" FACTIONS MANEUVER TO EITHER PROTECT OR INCREASE THEIR STRENGTH RELATIVE TO EACH OTHER. ACCORDING TO A "MODERATE" MINISTER, THE "RADICAL" FACTION HAS HAD ITS STRENGTH AND INFLUENCE SIGNIFICANTLY DIMINISHED AS A RESULT OF ITS INABILITY TO FORMULATE A PRACTICAL PLAN FOR INCREASING PRODUCTION AND THE FAILURE OF THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES TO OFFER ASSISTANCE. THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE HAS BEEN SEEN BY SOME OBSERVERS AS OFFERING THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY FOR THE TWO FACTIONS TO TEST THEIR STRENGTH AGAINST ONE ANOTHER. THE PARTICULAR OPPORTUNITY WOULD BE THE ELECTION OF THE PARTY'S FOUR VICE PRESIDENTS. (PRIME MINISTER MANLEY, THE PARTY PRESIDENT, IS EXPECTED TO BE ELECTED AGAIN, UNOPPOSED.)

4. THE PRESENT VICE PRESIDENTS INCLUDE THREE
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"MODERATES" -- FOREIGN MINISTER P.J. PATTERSON, LABOR MINISTER WILLIAM ISAACS AND PUBLIC SERVICE MINISTER HOWARD COOKE -- AND ONE "RADICAL" -- HOUSING MINISTER ANTHONY SPAULDING. NONE OF THE INCUMBENTS HAVE YET ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY WHETHER THEY WILL SEEK RE-ELECTION. ISAACS HAS PRIVATELY TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER HE DOES NOT WANT TO STAND BUT EXPECTS THAT THE OTHER THREE WILL. THE TEST WILL COME IF ISAACS DOES IN FACT STAND DOWN. IF A "RADICAL" CAN WIN THE VICE PRESIDENCY NOW HELD BY ISAACS, IT WILL BE A DEMONSTRABLE VICTORY FOR THE PNP LEFT.

5. TO DATE, ONLY TWO PERSONS HAVE BEEN PROPOSED AS CANDIDATES. ONE IS DESMOND LEAKEY, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, WHO WAS NOMINATED BY DERRICK HEAVEN, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND WHOSE CANDIDACY HAS BEEN ENDORSED BY YOUTH MINISTER HUGH SMALL AND MOBILIZATION MINISTER D.K. DUNCAN. THE OTHER IS CARMEN MCGREGOR, MINISTER OF STATE FOR WOMEN'S AFFAIRS IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE. LEAKEY IS A CANDIDATE OF THE "RADICALS" WHILE MRS.

MCGREGOR IS THE NOMINEE OF THE PNP WOMEN'S MOVEMENT. MRS. MCGREGOR'S CANDIDACY, WHICH WAS REPORTEDLY PROMPTED BY THE PRIME MINISTER, IS NOT THOUGHT TO BE SERIOUS; RATHER, IT MAY BE INTENDED TO HOLD A BLOC OF VOTES UNTIL THEY ARE WANTED FOR SOME OTHER CANDIDATE. THE CANDIDACY OF LEAKEY, WHO IS ONE OF THE LESS PROMINENT OF "RADICALS", MAY BE INTENDED LARGELY TO KEEP A SECOND "RADICAL" IN THE CONTEST WITHOUT PUTTING THE PRESTIGE OF ONE OF THE FACTION'S MORE PROMINENT MEMBERS IN JEOPARDY. AN EMBASSY OFFICER WAS TOLD THAT HUGH SMALL UNDERTOOK A MEASURE OF TENTATIVE CANVASSING TO ASSESS WHETHER HE SHOULD STAND. THE RESPONSE WAS REPORTEDLY TEPID AND SMALL DECIDED NOT TO ENTER THE CONTEST.
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KINGSTON 4818

6. WHILE THE ELECTION OF THE FOUR VICE PRESIDENTS MAY BE THE MOST DRAMATIC AND REVEALING ASPECT OF THE PNP'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE, THE "RADICAL" -

"MODERATE" DICHOTOMY WILL BE IN EVIDENCE IN OTHER ASPECTS OF THE MEETING. THE PARTY'S YOUTH ORGANIZATION (YO) HAS ALREADY CALLED FOR VERY RADICAL SOLUTIONS FOR JAMAICA'S PROBLEMS (SEE KINGSTON 4646), THE YO'S "POSITION PAPER" COULD WELL SPARK SHARP DEBATE; IF IT DOES, THE RESULT COULD BE AN INTENSIFICATION OF FACTIONAL DIFFERENCES. HOWEVER, THE UNUSUAL QUIET SURROUNDING THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE NOW EVIDENT SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT THE PARTY IS SUFFERING FROM WEAKENED MORALE, AND IT MAY THUS BE THAT THE CONFERENCE WILL PASS EQUALLY QUIETLY, NEITHER FACTION MAY WISH TO PUSH CONFRONTATION. THE "RADICALS" MAY HAVE DECIDED THAT THEIR FAILURES EARLIER THIS YEAR HAVE BEEN SERIOUSLY EMBARRASSING. AND NOT WANT TO RISK FURTHER THEIR REDUCED PRESTIGE. CONFIDENTIAL

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IN THIS SETTING, THE 'MODERATES' WOULD SEEM FREE TO CONSOLIDATE THEIR POSITION. HOWEVER, GIVEN THEIR LOYALTY TO MICHAEL MANLEY AND THE PRIME MINISTER'S PREDISPOSITION TOWARD HIS YOUNG "RADICAL" COLLEAGUES, THE "MODERATES" WILL PROBABLY RESTRAIN THEMSELVES AND MAKE MUCH LESS OF THEIR OPPORTUNITY THAN THEY MIGHT. IRVING

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: RULING PARTY, PARTY MEETINGS
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977KINGST04818
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770299-0064
Format: TEL
From: KINGSTON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
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Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
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Status: NATIVE
Subject: PNP APPROACHES ANNUAL CONFERENCE
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To: STATE
Type: TE
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Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009